

HYPACANTUS RAFINESQUE, 1810 (PISCES, CARANGIDAE):
REQUEST FOR SUPPRESSION UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS
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1. C. S. Rafinesque Schmaltz (1810 : 43) created the name *Hypacantus* for a genus of fishes so defined: "Corpo compresso, un ala dorsale opposta all'ala anale, e dei raggi sciolti situati anteriormente ad ambidue". He added the following remarks: "Questo genere differisce dal *Centronotus* nell'avere dei raggi sciolti avanti all'ala anale fra l'ano ed essa; viene formata dal *Scomber aculeatus* di Linneus, ossia il *Centronotus vadigo* di Lacepede". Rafinesque then corrected the name to *Hypacantha* (*Analyse de la Nature*, 1815 : 84).

2. Rafinesque's definition is very rough, as many others of his. However, he quotes *Centronotus vadigo* Lacépède, that corresponds to *Scomber amia* Linnaeus. The latter can therefore be accepted as type of *Hypacanthus*, as correctly stated by Smith-Vaniz (1973 : 228). So, *Hypacantus* is a senior synonym of *Lichia* Cuvier, 1817 (type: *Scomber amia* L.).

3. D. S. Jordan (*Genera of Fishes*, 1917 : 80) quoted the genus *Hypacanthus* (emended spelling) with *Scomber aculeatus* L. as type (Incidentally, such species does not occur in Linnaeus' writings). Only in 1936—after a very long oblivion—the name *Hypacanthus* reappeared, as H. W. Fowler (*Mar. Fishes W. Africa*, 2: 717) used the binomen *Hypacanthus amia* (L.).

4. A. Wheeler was interested in the problem *Lichia*-*Hypacanthus* and published (1962 : 535) a detailed history of the case, which I have just summarized above. He preferred to keep the name *Lichia*, stating that "... to preserve the well known name *Lichia* special action will be required to suppress *Hypacanthus*". The latter, therefore, would be a "nomen oblitum".

5. *Lichia amia* is a name almost universally employed. It is found in *all* the classical books on the European fishes. It would be easy to assemble more than 50 references, starting from old authors as Bonaparte, Moreau, Steindachner, etc. and ending with the recent volume of CLOFNAM (Hureau and Monod, 1, 1973 : 377).

6. I don't know of more than ten *Hypacanthus* appearances in the literature. Furthermore, only Smith-Vaniz and Staiger (1973 : 228) used this name after a critical discussion of the nomenclatorial problem. All the other authors (H. W. Fowler, J. L. B. Smith, G. Maul, R. Dollfus, F. La Monte, J. R. Norman), simply put *H. amia* in their lists or gave short descriptions without comments on the proper name of the fish. I regret to say that *Hypacanthus amia* occurs on a single paper dealing with the Mediterranean fishes, and that is mine (*Fishes of Rhodes*, 1947 : 171). But here again the name was just mentioned in a faunistic list, prepared with the aid of Fowler's book, then supposed to be a safe guide.

7. The name *Lichia* is to be preserved if stability in nomenclature is desired. *Hypacanthus* can be considered as a "nomen oblitum", in agreement with Wheeler's opinion. *Lichia amia* is a binomen currently used for about 150 years, being applied to a common Carangid in the whole literature concerning the Mediterranean fishes. We must consider how annoying is the revival of old and long forgotten names. Such changes which are not imposed by serious classificatory reasons are too often regretted, not only by specialists but also, and even more, by general zoologists and people interested in fish and fisheries. The former use of *Lichia* for fishes now placed in different genera is not an obstacle to its preservation, because *Clupea*, *Gadus*, *Gobius*, etc. are in the same situation.

Wheeler proposed the validation of *Lichia*. Let us go a further step and have *Hypacanthus* suppressed, as it is necessary for the said validation.

8. It is therefore requested that the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature:

- (1) use its plenary powers to suppress the generic name *Hypacanthus* (*Hypacantha*, *Hypacanthus*) Rafinesque, 1810, for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy;
- (2) place the generic name so suppressed under the plenary powers in (1) above on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology;
- (3) place the generic name *Lichia* Cuvier, 1817 (type species by subsequent designation by Regan, 1903: *Scomber amia* L.) on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology.

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